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Brian Leech

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

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# “Hired Hands from Abroad”: The Populist Producer’s Ethic, Immigrant Workers, and Nativism in Montana’s 1894 State Capital Election

Brian Leech

*University of Wisconsin–Madison*

## Abstract

Although many scholars study state history and most states have long-running history magazines, few write explicitly about state identity. This is surprising, given that many people identify with their state as often as they identify with their region or nation. This presentation will encourage research into this area with an investigation of how Montanans used the 1894 election for the state capital to describe who and what they felt best represented their state. Based on research into newspapers and political propaganda for both towns competing in the election for the state capital, this presentation investigates Montanans’ ideas about immigration, labor, and good citizenship in the late nineteenth century. It argues that the state’s Populist movement and immigration debates (particularly surrounding the Irish and Chinese populations) should figure as prominently in descriptions of late-nineteenth century Montana as the battles between industrial titans that often dominate historians’ narratives. Indeed, this election provided Montanans with a forum through which to both express their concerns about the “native”ness of the state’s new mine-working residents and debate the value of Populist and labor union ideas, particularly the value of manual labor. Concerns about what made both a good individual citizen (and his/her relationship to unionism) and a good corporate citizen (particularly in relation to the powerful Anaconda Mining Company and the Northern Pacific Railroad) shaped election rhetoric. By revealing a formative moment in the development of Montana’s political culture, a culture that still retains many elements of its Populist heritage, this presentation suggests how people “imagine communities” at the level of the state.

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On October 30, 1894, politician Colonel Wilbur Fiske Sanders delivered a fiery two and a half hour speech in Billings, Montana, on the primary issue of the day: the run-off election for the siting of the state capital. Warning his listeners that “the question is not left to sober minded citizens who have the interest and welfare of the state at heart and who have wives and families, but foreigners, with no knowledge of our needs, have an equal say in the matter,” he argued that therefore, “it behooves good citizens to do their duty.” According to Sanders, their duty was to vote against naming Anaconda the capital because it was a smelter town controlled by outsiders, a place swarming with immigrant workers, an area located so far to the margins of the state that it was practically a foreign land. Instead, Sanders and fellow speakers urged Montana’s citizens to vote for Anaconda’s cultured, clean, and “established” rival, the Queen City of Helena.<sup>1</sup> One week earlier, the city of Butte saw its own capital contest orators tell a completely different story about the capital election. Former President of the Butte Miner’s Union, Irishman Patrick F. Boland, explained the case of labor against Helena and for Anaconda.<sup>2</sup> According to Boland, Helena treated its “laboring men . . . as a degraded lot of beings.” Attacking labor’s favorite target, Helena’s Chinese, Boland provocatively explained that “in Anaconda . . . there is no caste, except that which exists between the pigtail rat eater and every true American.”<sup>3</sup> The state’s workers would rally, Boland argued, and Anaconda would surely reign supreme.

These two meetings exemplified the conflicting views expressed during Montana’s 1894 election for the state capital and the election’s close relationship to both the state’s labor movement and ethno-cultural politics. Concentrating on these two issues differs from the traditional interpretation of the election, which explains the battle over the location of the capital as simply another episode in the long-running war of two copper barons. This interpretation focuses on Marcus Daly, the manager of the Anaconda Company

who fought (and paid) for Anaconda's bid, and on William Clark, another mining magnate with a great hatred for Daly and favoritism toward Helena's bid.<sup>4</sup> This paper differs from past analyses of the election by looking beyond the copper kings' battle. Instead of trying to explain why one location beat the other, this paper will investigate election rhetoric to discover what ideas truly mattered to turn of the century Montanans. It focuses less on politician's letters, legislative documents, and the other stuff of high politics. Instead, it examines discourses of class, ethnicity, race, and gender, found in the pamphlets and newspapers that covered the debate. That discourse reveals that Montanans used the 1894 capital election to consider and contest their new state's identity—who and what made a good Montana citizen.

Discussing a "state identity" might seem strange to some academics. Scholars certainly discuss nationalism and regionalism, national identity and regional identity, but the sub-administrative unit of the state is neglected. Although many scholars study state history and most states have long-running history magazines, few write explicitly about state identity. This is surprising, given that many people identify with their state as often as they identify with their region or nation.<sup>5</sup> It is time to recognize that state boundaries can be just as important as national or regional ones to the people living within them.<sup>6</sup> By looking at the political rhetoric in the state's newspapers and pamphlets, this paper shows how people "imagine communities," as nationalism scholar Benedict Anderson would put it, at the level of the state.<sup>7</sup>

More specifically, capital election arguments can help map the contours of what constituted good citizenship in Montana, a project yet to be studied by historians for this period and place. Scholars find citizenship to be an elusive concept, although many, like Seymour Martin Lipset, associate it with the right to full political participation in a state.<sup>8</sup> Beyond a legal right to residence and to engage in active political participation in a place, however, is something more intangible: good citizenship. This morally-based idea of citizenship requires not only "obeying a country's laws and perhaps helping to make them" but also "virtuous behavior."<sup>9</sup>

During the capital battle, Montanans' used two different types of rhetoric to create arguments about good state citizenship: populist rhetoric and nativist rhetoric. The first type of rhetoric revolved around ideas important to both the state's growing labor movement and labor's political outlet at the time—the Populist Party.<sup>10</sup> The Populist movement, still primarily associated with agrarian radicalism by most historians, was actually a mainstream political phase for Montana's urban labor movement.<sup>11</sup> Politicians and newspapers still had to appeal to populist rhetoric in an election that had little to do with party politics, which suggests that it may be more relevant to think of populism as “a persistent yet mutable style of political rhetoric,” in the words of historian Michael Kazin, than as a political party.<sup>12</sup>

As it emerged in Montana's 1894 election, populist rhetoric asked state residents to embrace a producer's ethic that deeply valued manual labor. Many involved in the populist movements of the nineteenth century sought a celebration of the Jeffersonian myth of the independent, democratic yeoman. Drawing on this long tradition, a Gilded Age producer's ethic emerged “that only those who created wealth in tangible, material ways . . . could be trusted to guard the nation's piety and liberties.” Providing a citizen with toughness and practical knowledge, manual labor, this ethic held, was the only “natural, authentic, and natural kind.”<sup>13</sup> In this tradition, noble producers faced the “perpetual antithesis and exploiter of ‘the people,’” the elite, who were described as being “everything that devout producers, thankfully, were not: condescending, profligate, artificial, effete, manipulative, given to intellectual instead of practical thinking, and dependent on the labor of others.”<sup>14</sup>

In determining what made good citizenship, Montanans involved in the 1894 state capital election also turned to a second type of rhetoric that revolved around immigration and ethnicity. This rhetoric included both ethno-cultural considerations in a state containing a large Catholic immigrant population as well as more blatantly nativist, language toward all types of migrants to the state, particularly the Chinese.<sup>15</sup> Some Montanans looked upon even those immigrants who underwent naturalization as unable to achieve good citizen-

ship. These doubters believed that certain immigrants never gave up their foreign allegiances—politically, culturally, or socially. What the truly "American" behavior demanded of a citizen remained a subject of debate. As historian James R. Barrett makes clear, "Americanism, was, in fact, a contested ideal. There were numerous understandings of what it meant to be an American, divergent values associated with the concept."<sup>16</sup>

Americanism, the producer's ethic, and good citizenship all found their way into capital contest rhetoric. Helena's supporters, both Euro-American and African American, stressed the importance of being native to the state, free from foreign influences, and members of a settled family. They doubted the Americanization of Anaconda's seemingly itinerant immigrant residents, particularly the Irish, whom they believed were beholden to the foreign power of the Catholic Church. Anaconda's backers, on the other hand, stressed the importance of manual work and labor consciousness to good state citizenship. For them, Americanism had nothing to do with one's long-term presence in the state. Instead, Americanism was the act of being productive, although certain people, primarily Helena's Chinese, did not fit this profile because they were supposedly prone to servility. During their elections discussions, therefore, Montanans formed new ideas of what made a good state citizen and then used these ideas as potent political weapons.

The copper smelter town of Anaconda and the Anaconda Mining Company that ran its operations became particularly easy targets for Helena's backers because foreign-born laborers were central to both. By the turn of the century, the Anaconda and Butte mining-smelter area had the largest foreign-born population in the state. The 1900 census shows that nearly 7,000 of Anaconda's 9,543 residents were either foreign-born or native-born with foreign parentage.<sup>17</sup> In 1894, 3,464 of the Anaconda Company's 5,534 employees were of foreign birth, including 1,251 Irishmen.<sup>18</sup>

Those fighting against Anaconda argued it was quite wrong that "this corporation has sent to foreign shores and contracted with alien laborers to come to Montana."<sup>19</sup> Helena's supporters thought that Anaconda's immigrant workers had no real understanding of the

state's, or even the nation's, way of life. A Bozeman resident assured the *Billings Gazette* that "the whole company are of foreign birth, and have none of the instincts and love for American institutions that a genuine American has."<sup>20</sup> Newspapers' nativist arguments claimed that immigrants would corrupt election results by voting even though they had no allegiance to the state. Surely the Anaconda Company desired to "defraud the honest voters of Montana by running in hundreds of outsiders," the *Helena Independent* moaned.<sup>21</sup> Politician Joseph K. Toole agreed, claiming that Anaconda maintained "hired hands from abroad" ready to do mine manager Marcus Daly's duty.<sup>22</sup> According to the *Great Falls Tribune*, these "imported aliens" were "dishonest," ignorant, and "of the most objectionable class."<sup>23</sup> Lawyers for pro-Helena men issued challenges to naturalization in Butte in the hopes of stemming pro-Anaconda votes.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, members of the Helena Capital committee enlisted the help of volunteers to check naturalization lists in southwestern Montana.<sup>25</sup>

Foreign laborers, Helena supporters assumed, would soon leave the state and should not, therefore, have a say in how it was run. Many of the immigrants were single men, and their supposed "choice" not to bring families with them revealed their intent not to become state citizens.<sup>26</sup> Advocates for Helena as the capital worried that Montana, with almost twice as many male than female residents in 1890, would continue its drastically skewed gender ratio with the addition of more foreign men unaccompanied by women and children. The ratio of men to women was much closer in Lewis and Clark County, where Helena was located (11,912 to 7,233), than in Deer Lodge County, where Anaconda was located (10,392 to 4,763).<sup>27</sup>

Helena's supporters claimed that Helena differed greatly from Anaconda. A branch of the Women's Helena for the Capital Club listed Helena's "permanent homes and settled resident population" as one of its most important advantages.<sup>28</sup> Supporters of this viewpoint insisted that Helena's inhabitants, unlike Anaconda's smelter workers, owned their own homes. Helena's stable population lived in a cultural capital, the "social, religious, and moral center" of the state, Helena's *Colored Citizen* similarly claimed.<sup>29</sup> According to supporters, Helena was full of beautiful "Montana homes" that "reflected lus-

ter upon the whole state."<sup>30</sup> Election literature portrayed Helena as full of churches, schools, and more "comforts and luxuries" than any nearby site.<sup>31</sup> With its emphasis on home and family, a feminized vision of a cultured city emerges from this rhetoric. Helena was the "Queen City" of the Rockies, supporters agreed.<sup>32</sup>

Anaconda's supporters, however, attacked this feminized image of Helena as alien to the state's true working men's culture. They drew heavily on populist rhetoric to label Helenans as members of the condescending and effete elite. A satirical pamphlet titled "Helena's Social Supremacy" criticized Helena's self-satisfaction with "my culture, my refinement, my polish, my general, all-around, Ne-plus-ultra style and elegance."<sup>33</sup> Many held that the typical "emasculate Helena man" was so privileged that he did not need to labor.<sup>34</sup> In a town brimming with "refinement, culture, elegance," men sat at the club playing "harmless games"—not working hard like true Montanans.<sup>35</sup> Papers favoring Anaconda as the capital heartily concurred and explained that giving Helenans access to the resources that came with a state capital simply allowed them to work less, "expecting the rest of the state to continue to support them in luxurious idleness."<sup>36</sup> According to Anaconda supporters, similar negative stereotypes held true for Helena's women, particularly the upper-class members of the Women's Helena for the Capital Club, who had servants and thus did not "know what honest toil is."<sup>37</sup> Helenans' dislike of hard labor, the only "honest, authentic, and natural kind" of work, according to the producer's ethic, suggested their un-American nature.<sup>38</sup>

A pro-Anaconda satirical pamphlet portrayed Anaconda, in contrast to wealthy, lazy Helena, as the true working man's town, the land of the labor union. Seeing Anaconda through Helena's eyes, the pamphlet proposed "a rude, rough smelter town, rooted in vileness and vulgarity; a town nine-tenths of whose population toil the year around at manual labor." The pamphlet suggested that not only did a good Montana citizen engage in manual labor to toughen himself and to give him necessary practical knowledge, but such work also gave him a burgeoning labor consciousness.<sup>39</sup> According to the newspapers, while Anaconda's workingmen were unionized, Helena's unions were "starved out of existence."<sup>40</sup> Many unions, including di-



visions of the Knights of Labor, signed on to support labor's town over Helena, which, according to the newspapers, was home to many ruthless mine owners.<sup>41</sup> The only choice for labor was Anaconda.

Political rhetoric was so successful at creating Anaconda as the working man's Montana town and Helena as a city of rich, effete employers, that Helena's supporters increasingly devoted time to defending Helena's wages and care for the working man.<sup>42</sup> Some Helena supporters attacked the unions themselves for their political action, but most talk by both Helena's and Anaconda's supporters was labor friendly (although not often immigrant friendly).<sup>43</sup> With both sides drawing on the important producer's ethic, capital contest rhetoric constructed Montana's ideal citizen as a rough, rugged worker.

The ethnicity, race, and religion of this good working citizen also came up for debate. On one side of the argument were Helena's supporters, who believed that the ideal state citizen was certainly not an Irishman from the Anaconda-Butte area. Because they emphasized the importance of being a native Montanan who maintained allegiance to the nation and state, Helena's backers were particularly concerned with the itinerant Irish.<sup>44</sup> Most importantly to their critics, the Irish were supposedly beholden to a dangerous foreign power: the Catholic Church. Helena's backers received assistance from the American Protective Association (APA), newly arrived in Montana in the 1892.

The APA was a secret society, 2.5 million strong, whose primary directive was to force Catholic immigrants controlled by the church's "Roman hierarchy" outside of the U.S.<sup>45</sup> Montana's APA proclaimed that the Irish and their Catholic friends the Italians were under the spell of the Pope and so they did his bidding. The "papists," the APA claimed, were part of a grand conspiracy on the part of the Pope to control world affairs. Irish immigrants followed the Catholic Church's directives, not federal or state laws. Because "their first allegiance is to Rome," Catholics could never have "loyalty to true Americanism."<sup>46</sup> The APA, therefore, fought against "the tyranny of the priesthood" because it wanted "good, loyal free American citizens, owing allegiance to God and country alone, with no intermediaries."<sup>47</sup>

Growing ethno-cultural tension affected most of southwestern Montana's mid-1890s elections, particularly the fall 1894 election.<sup>48</sup> Historian David Emmons suggests that the APA played a significant role in deciding the capital question. The organization's paper labeled Helena the "protestant town" and Anaconda the "the fiefdom" of "pope Marcus."<sup>49</sup> The APA suggested that Irish subservience to both the Catholic Church and the local "pope"—Marcus Daly's Anaconda Company—proved that the Irish were innately dependent. Because of this nature and their maintenance of foreign allegiance to the church, the Irish supposedly could never become good, Americanized citizens like well-established Helena Protestants.<sup>50</sup>

Anaconda's backers would not sit idly by, however, while Helena's supporters placed all of the dangerous "others" in Anaconda. Anaconda's supporters, particularly the *Butte Bystander*, a pro-labor newspaper, hammered away at the presence of too many Chinese, Jews, and Blacks in Helena. These groups were further removed from the construction of "real" Montanans than immigrants in Anaconda, the *Butte Bystander* argued, and it was these "others" who would steal "true" citizens' jobs. Anaconda and Butte's Irish were unionized and their productivity and labor consciousness proved them worthy of citizenship in the state. Helena's "scab labor" blacks, however, were not unionized, often working as servants, and thus failed the test for good citizenship.<sup>51</sup>

Members of Helena's small African American community fought against their negative portrayal by Anaconda's supporters.<sup>52</sup> Their paper, the *Colored Citizen*, was a weekly published especially for the capital election and financed by Helena's Republican Party. Editor Joseph P. Ball spent much of his time defending the citizenship of his fellow African Americans, particularly because Anaconda's supporters challenged blacks' right to belong in the state. The paper authorized African American citizenship in Montana by attaching the story of black Montanans to the story of the frontier—the narrative of Montana's origins. The October 29, 1894 edition, for instance, argued that "some of us can boast of being pioneers."<sup>53</sup>

Asserting that blacks were true Montana citizens, the *Colored Citizen* questioned immigrants' own claims to citizenship.<sup>54</sup> One of

the paper's primary tools to combat Anaconda's bid for the capital was to attack the Anaconda Mining Company's immigrant employees. According to Ball, the company would not employ blacks so that it could enjoy cheap immigrant labor instead.<sup>55</sup> In the final edition before the capital election, editor Ball placed an announcement in enormous type on the front page: "The Anaconda Mining Company Does NOT employ a solitary Colored man. Dagoes and Foreigners are preferred to NATIVE COLORED AMERICANS."<sup>56</sup> The newspaper thus claimed good Americanism for native blacks by excluding immigrants. Like white supporters of Helena, Montana's African Americans stressed the importance of being a native Montanan not under the control of foreign influences.

While Helena's supporters professed doubts about the ability of foreigners to become Americanized, Anaconda's backers maintained that Americanism was the act of being productive. Because residents of the Anaconda area were true toilers, they were obviously good state citizens and should therefore be rewarded with the capital. According to Anaconda's supporters, however, this profile of a good citizen did not fit Montana's Chinese. The Chinese could not Americanize, even if they regularly performed manual labor, argued pro-Anaconda forces. Many American workers in the Gilded Age West believed that the Chinese inherently acted like slaves to authority and therefore did not exhibit the "manly self reliance" demanded by American principles. Those embracing the producer's ethic, from the Knights of Labor to the Populist Party, all believed that Chinese immigrants "raised the specter of perpetual servility to elites that had long been associated, almost exclusively, with African Americans."<sup>57</sup>

The danger seemed to be emanating particularly from Helena, which held the largest population of Chinese in the state. Pro-labor newspapers soon referred to Helena as the "Chinese Capital" of Montana.<sup>58</sup> To white workers' minds, the scant pay and horrible conditions that Helena's Chinese accepted could only drag down the status of American workers. Western union leaders believed that the Chinese drove down wages by splitting the labor force, creating an easily controlled group of cheap-to-employ "new" immigrants that

companies could use instead of older established workers—the true producers.<sup>59</sup> It was true that the Chinese often worked for lower wages, but not by choice. Although the Chinese did not usually compete against white workers for the same jobs, when they did they found themselves forced to accept lower wages because of their exclusion from white-run unions.<sup>60</sup>

Montana's unionists increasingly feared the ability of the Chinese, as "scab labor," to take away white men's jobs.<sup>61</sup> As one "workingman" explained about Helena's employers, "if a white man won't work for what they will give, a Chinaman will and in about all kinds of work they prefer a Chinaman, for a Chinaman can be driven around like a slave under the lash."<sup>62</sup> According to a pro-Anaconda pamphlet, unlike "American workingmen," the innately servile Chinese kept "more quiet," were "infinitely cheaper," and "they knew their place" in society.<sup>63</sup>

Anaconda's supporters were particularly upset about the kind of work the Chinese did in Helena. They did "women's work" for prosperous whites, Anaconda's supporters argued, which made them suspect as good state citizens. Chinese men ran twenty-six laundries in Helena and worked as servants in the homes of wealthy Helena families.<sup>64</sup> This situation attacked Anglo gender norms in which women traditionally did the domestic work.<sup>65</sup> "White women have no chance for employment as domestics or washerwomen in Helena," one newspaper editor complained; "that field is entirely occupied by Chinamen."<sup>66</sup> The Women's Protective Assembly union of Butte agreed with the men running pro-Anaconda newspapers. They soon passed a resolution against Helena, "the city which . . . only employs workingwomen when they compete at the same, or at a less rate of wages than Chinamen."<sup>67</sup>

In all of these arguments, Anaconda's supporters implicitly supported a gender division of labor, where women always did the domestic work, possibly to help protect the working-class women immigrants from Europe who would perform these tasks in the absence of the Chinese. By employing Chinese men, people from Helena supposedly failed to protect the kind of citizens that Anaconda held so dear: European immigrants. By subverting white gender norms,

the Chinese commenced a frontal attack on “American manhood” and “American womanhood” in the 1890s, and during the capital election, it was clear that Helena was assisting the Chinese in this horrible deed.<sup>68</sup>

The immediate effects of these capital election arguments became apparent at the beginning of November, 1894. In the final vote for the capital, Helena garnered 27,024 votes, edging out Anaconda, which gained 25,118 votes. According to Helena’s backers, the Queen City defeated the dangers of foreign labor on November 5, 1894.<sup>69</sup>

More importantly to this paper, however, Montanans’ ambivalence towards immigrant labor came to the forefront during the 1894 state capital election. Both sides’ arguments relied upon populist ideas, nativism and Americanism. Driven by the growing labor movement, Anaconda’s supporters argued that being productive made one a good state citizen. This definition held true for all but people supposedly prone to a “slavish” existence, like the Chinese immigrants who inhabited Helena. In their eyes, Helena was unlike the “real” workers’ Montana. Helena’s backers, on the other hand, argued that being native to and entrenched in the state was more important than being productive to prove one’s worth as a state citizen. The Irish and other immigrants who worked southwest Montana’s mines and smelters did not fit their description of proper Montanans. Thus, they argued that Anaconda should lose the election. Montanans therefore used the 1894 state capital election to contest and create a state identity that generally embraced manual labor but remained ambivalent about what made a resident truly American.

## Notes

- 1 "The Home Stretch," *Butte Miner* (MT) 30 October 1894.
- 2 His affiliation is noted in David M. Emmons, *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 187.
- 3 "Meetings Last Night," *Butte Bystander*, October 17, 1894.
- 4 Dave Walter, "Montana's Venomous 'Capital Fight,' 1894," *Montana Magazine* 124 (March-April 1994): 38-45.. See also K. Ross Toole, *Montana: An Uncommon Land* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 182. K. Ross Toole, "Marcus Daly: A Study of Business in Politics" (MA thesis, Montana State University, 1948), 129-130; H. Minar Shoebotham, *Anaconda: Life of Marcus Daly the Copper King* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Co., 1956), 133-140; Forrest LeRoy Foor, "The Senatorial Aspirations of William A. Clark, 1898-1901: A Study in Montana Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1941), 16. More recent interpretations give a broader view of late nineteenth century Montana politics, but still end up fixated on Clark versus Daly, especially when they explain the capital election. See Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 213-214; Michael Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier* (Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 1995), 103-105; Michael Malone, "Midas of the West: The Incredible Career of William Andrews Clark," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 33, no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 2-17. A second line of interpretation of the capital election describes it as another in a long line of battles between numerous community leaders for money and prestige. It draws more politicians and businessmen into the story, but Clark and Daly still appear as the two central leaders who drove state politics. See William L. Lang, "Spoils of Statehood: Montana Communities in Conflict, 1888-1894," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 37, no. 4 (Autumn 1987): 34-45; Jean Marie Schmidt, "Copper Kings, Populists and Log-Rollers: The Third Session of the Montana State Legislature, 1893" (MA thesis, Montana State University, 1981).
- 5 Historian John W. Caughey unknowingly makes a case for the study of state identity when he complains that "peculiarly, the inhabitants of this area seem to be relatively innocent of regionalism. Whereas millions proclaim 'I am a Texan' or 'I am a Californian,' almost no one boasts, 'I am a Southwesterner.'" See John W. Caughey, "The Spanish Southwest: An Example of Subconscious Regionalism," in *Regionalism in America*, ed. Merrill Jensen (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1951), 184.

- 6 Some of the few examples of this scholarship include Liza Nicholas, "Wyoming as America: Celebrations, a Museum, and Yale," *American Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2002): 437-465; David James, "The Jamestown Jubilees, 'State Patriotism' and Virginia Identity in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 110, no. 1 (2002): 35-68.
- 7 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991). On contestation and ambivalence being the key to people's construction of area-centered identities, see Katherine Morrissey, *Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- 8 Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1960).
- 9 David Ricci labels these Citizenship I (legal), Citizenship II (political), and Citizenship III (moral). See David M. Ricci, *Good Citizenship in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8.
- 10 On the rapid growth of western Montana's labor movement, see Jerry W. Calvert, *The Gibraltar: Socialism and Labor in Butte, Montana, 1895-1920* (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 1988); Norma Smith, "The Rise and Fall of the Butte Miner's Union, 1878-1914," (M.A. thesis, Montana State University, 1961);
- 11 Unlike Populist parties in the Midwest and South, Montana's Populist Party was not an outgrowth of the Farmer's Alliance, as the classic studies of Populism show. These classics include John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961); Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). According to historian John Enyeart, urban workers did not just comprise "the main constituency of the Populist Party" in Montana, as they did in other Rocky Mountain states; "they controlled it." See John P. Enyeart, "'The Exercise of the Intelligent Ballot': Rocky Mountain Workers, Urban Politics, and Shorter Hours, 1886-1911," *Labor: Studies in the Working-Class History of the Americas* 1, no. 3 (2004): 45-69. On Rocky Mountain populism, see Robert W. Larson, *Populism in the Mountain West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986); Thomas A. Clinch, *Urban Populism and Free Silver in Montana* (Missoula: University of Montana Press, 1970); Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico Populism: A Study of Radical Protest in a Western Territory* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1974); David B. Griffiths, *Populism in the Western United States, 1890-1900*, 2 vols. (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992). Populism grew rapidly in appeal following the devastating effects of the 1893 depression on Montana's working class. See W. Thomas White, "Boycott: The Pullman Strike in Montana," *Montana:*

- The Magazine of Western History* (1979): 2-13; Dave Walter, "Hogan's Army: A Petition with Boots On," in *Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place*, ed. Harry W. Fritz, Mary Murphy, and Robert Swartout, Jr. (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 2002), 65-78.
- 12 Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6.
- 13 Ibid., 13.
- 14 Ibid., 15.
- 15 On ethnic and religious differences as relatively the most important sources of voting differences, see work that created the "ethno-cultural thesis," such as Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 165. Critics of this ethno-cultural approach are discussed in Ronald Formisano, "The Invention of the Ethnocultural Interpretation," *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 2 (April 1994): 453-477. On anti-Catholic bias, see Ray Allen Billington, *Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Macmillan, 1938). On nativism, particularly towards Europeans, see John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).
- 16 James R. Barrett, "Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (December 1992): 996-1020, quote on 997.
- 17 Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 21. Thousands more Irish lived in nearby Silver Bow County, home to Butte. Around 4,600 residents of Butte were Irish in 1900. See Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 64-65.
- 18 "Statement of Wages Paid and Employees, September 1894," Anaconda Mining Company Records, Manuscript Collection (hereafter MC) 169, box 57, folder 40, Montana Historical Society, Helena (hereafter MHS). The chain migration by family members and friends from Ireland made the large size of the Irish population in Anaconda and Butte possible. See Emmons, *Butte Irish*, 13-34.
- 19 "Vote Against Low Wages," *Butte Miner*, October 30, 1894.
- 20 Arthur Truman, "Gallatin for Helena," *Billings Gazette*, August 18, 1894.
- 21 "Nice Town for Capital," *Helena Independent*, Nov. 4, 1894. See similar arguments in "Still Making Citizens," *Billings Gazette*, August 18, 1894; "Citizens By Wholesale," *Butte Miner*, October 6, 1894.



- 22 Joseph K. Toole, "Logic and Reason," *Butte Miner*, October 13, 1894.
- 23 The *Great Falls Tribune* attacked the *Helena Independent* for this anti-immigrant labor stance in "Abuse of Foreigners," *Great Falls Tribune*, September 19, 1894. See more defense of naturalization practices in the Silver Bow County mining area in "The Bystander," *Butte Bystander* (MT), October 12, 1894.
- 24 "On the Wrong Foot," *Anaconda Standard*, October 23, 1894.
- 25 Helena Capital Committee, form letter, 1894, Capital Contest Ephemera File, folder 3, MHS. See also "Good for Helena," *Butte Miner*, October 18, 1894; "The Anaconda Bluff," *Helena Independent*, October 10, 1894. A few pro-Helena newspapers claimed that illegal registration by Anacondans would be enforced by hired Pinkerton Detectives. See "Anaconda's Crookedness," *Missoulian*, November 4, 1894.
- 26 See discussion of the *Helena Independent's* anti-immigrant tactics in the *Great Falls Tribune*, September 19, 1894.
- 27 In 1890, Montana contained 87,882 men and 44,277 women. See Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-1970* [Computer file], (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 197?). This data later was collected in ICPSR 2896.
- 28 "Report from White Sulphur Springs Chapter," Women's Helena for the Capital Club Records, MC 48, box 2, folder 2, MHS. On the importance of home-owning, see J.A. MacKnight, "The Montana Capital Fight," 1049. See also Toole, "Logic and Reason," for a description of Helena's "permanent, stable, and conservative population."
- 29 *Colored Citizen*, (Helena, MT), September 10, 1894.
- 30 *Missoulian*, Sept. 19, 1894.
- 31 *Helena as the Capital City, 1894*, 13. See also A.H. Hersey, "Helena for the Capital."
- 32 J.H. Crooker, *A Pulpit Orator*, 1. The "Queen City" was written all over much of Helena's propaganda, including election-themed paper money in "Helena," Elections-Capital 1874, Vertical Files, MHS.
- 33 *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 45. See similar attacks on "Helena's High Society" in "Helena's High Society," *Anaconda Standard*, October 14, 1894; "Monopoly Influence," *Butte Bystander*, October 30, 1894. Anaconda's supporters printed hundreds to thousands of these pamphlets and spread them across the state. By October 24th, "several hundred copies of the 'Social Suprem-

acy' Book were put in circulation" as far east as Billings. See Mrs. Henry to Mrs. A.J. Davidson, October 24, 1894 in "Record Book," MC48, box 2, folder 4, MHS.

- 34 *Great Falls Tribune*, September 12, 1894.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 36 "Another Joint Debate," *Anaconda Standard*, October 15, 1894. See also "From a Butte Lady," *Ibid.*, October 24, 1894; "Meetings Last Night," *Butte Bystander*, October 17, 1894.
- 37 "Let Us All Say Amen," *Ibid.*, October 27, 1894. For more attacks on Helena's women, see "They Put It Wrong," *Ibid.*, October 9, 1894; "From a Butte Lady," *Anaconda Standard*, October 24, 1894; For the defense by Helena's supporters of its women's capital club, see "As Others See Us," *New York Outlook*, October 10, cited in Marysville *Mountaineer*, October 25, 1894. See also the *Butte Miner*, October 10, 1894; "More Scurrility," *Ibid.*, October 12, 1894; "Rouser for Helena," *Ibid.*, October 19, 1894.
- 38 Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 13.
- 39 *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 31.
- 40 First quote is from "Helena's Nine," *Anaconda Standard*, October 15, 1894. The second quote is from "Helena Wages: The Town as It Is-- The Story of a Helena Workingman," *Populist Tribune* (Butte), qtd. in *The Anaconda Standard*, October 6, 1894.
- 41 *Anaconda Standard*, October 14, 1894. For another major resolution against Helena's employers and a typical discussion of it by Anaconda supporters, see "'Helena's Labor Record,'" *Anaconda Standard*, October 15, 1894. Other trade unions issued similar attacks against Helena's supposedly wealthy, but low-paying employers. See "To Stone Cutters," *Anaconda Standard*, October 16, 1894. For other instances of prolabor Anaconda talk, see "Breen Replies," *Great Falls Tribune*, October 31, 1894; "Rubbing it In," *Anaconda Standard*, September 14, 1894; "Gone Wrong Again," *Ibid.*, September 13, 1894; "As a Laborer Sees It," *Ibid.*, October 23, 1894. "Labor in Helena," *Populist Tribune* (Butte), in *Anaconda Standard*, October 12, 1894; *Butte Inter-Mountain*, October 6, 1894. See also every issue of the labor newspaper, the *Butte Bystander*, from the middle of October, 1894 through the first week of November, particularly October 17, 1894; "The Wages Fake," *Ibid.*, October 27, 1894; "Workingmen, Read This," *Ibid.*, October 30, 1894; "Union Labor Love," *Ibid.*, November 2, 1894.
- 42 Many of these defenses also became attacks against the labor record of the other city involved in the election. See "Anaconda's Sad Plight," *Missoulian*, November 6, 1894; . "Reasons Why Helena," *Butte Miner*, October 12,

- 1894; "They Know the Crowd," *Helena Independent*, October 11, 1894; "The Pinkertons After Election," *Ibid.*, October 22, 1894; "Anaconda's Pinkerton Allies," *Ibid.*, October 25, 1894.
- 43 For one instance of anti-union, pro-Helena talk, see FW Bradley to N.H. Harris, 9 November, 1894, Bunker Hill & Sullivan Collection, University of Idaho, Moscow. I would like to thank David Emmons for sharing these letters with me.
- 44 The Irish population of Butte and Anaconda spent much of their time defending themselves from verbal attacks and negative ethnic portrayals. See the entry for Dec. 20, 1905, Ancient Order of Hibernians, *Division 1 Minute Book, November 2, 1900-February 28, 1906*, Ancient Order of Hibernians, OCO12, Butte Silver Bow Archives, Butte, Montana (hereafter BSA). Entry for April 16, 23, 1903, Robert Emmet Literary Association, *Volumes of Minutes #4, April 10, 1902-February 7, 1907*, OC012, BSA. See also Emmons, *The Butte Irish*, 114-118.
- 45 Quote is from "Our Newspapers," *Examiner* (Butte, MT), May 25, 1895. On the society's growth, see Les Wallace, *The Rhetoric of Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association, 1887-1911* (New York: Garland, 1990); Robert V. Hunt, Jr., "The Heyday of the Denver APA, 1892-1894," *Journal of the West* 35, no. 4 (October 1996): 74-81. On the APA and late nineteenth century anti-Catholicism, see also Donald L. Kinzer, *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964). The group estimated they had 10,000 members in Montana in 1895, see *Examiner* (Butte, MT), December 15, 1895; Council meetings in *Ibid.*, October 5, 1895;
- 46 The group's views are explained in "Daly in Seattle," *Ibid.*, May 18, 1895.
- 47 "What We Want," *Ibid.*, May 18, 1894. See also "APAs Awake!" *Ibid.*, August 17, 1894.
- 48 On APA involvement in the fall 1894 election, see R.H. Howey to T.C. Power, February 19, 1894, T.C. Power Papers, MC55, box 8, folder 33, MHS. On the involvement of the APA in 1890s elections, see the *Anaconda Standard*, July 6, 1894. By 1895, APA power in the southwestern mining camps had grown so strong that the APA-sponsored ticket for Butte mayor handily won the election. See *Examiner* (Butte, MT), November 16, 1894. Two years later, however, Irish miners gave enough support to hand the mayoral victory to an anti-APA politician. See Writer's Program of the Montana W.P.A., *Copper Camp: Stories of the World's Greatest Mining Town, Butte, Montana* (Helena, MT: Riverbend Publishing, 2002), 48-49.
- 49 See the *Examiner* (Butte, MT), October 31, 1896 and *Ibid.*, September 3, 1896. See similar rhetoric in *Ibid.*, September 13, 1894; *Ibid.*, February 20, 1896 and Emmons, "The Orange and the Green in Montana," 101-102.

- 50 The great importance of the APA and its conflict with Irish Catholics in this election and other political contests certainly calls into question the commonly held view that there was generally a "lack of animosity between Protestants and Catholics and between native-born Americans and white immigrants in the West." In contrast to this frequent assertion by political historians, analysis of the APA's role in the capital election instead supports historian David Emmons's view that Montana's Gilded Age society was actually rife with ethnocultural tension—tension that heavily influenced state elections. The first view (and quote) is from Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 360. This view is supported by Paul Kleppner, "Voters and Parties in the Western States, 1876-1900"; Paul Kleppner, "Politics Without Parties." The second view is from Emmons, *The Butte Irish*.
- 51 *The Butte Bystander*, November 1, 2, 17, 1894; Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 100. On Montana's Jewish community, concentrated in Helena and Butte, see Benjamin Kelson, "The Jews of Montana," (M.A. Thesis, Montana State University, 1950). One pamphlet suggested that Helena's African Americans could only find employment as servants to wealthy Helena residents. See *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 17.
- 52 For more on Montana's African American community, see Rex Myers, "Montana's Negro Newspapers, 1894-1911," *Montana Journalism Review* 16 (1973): 17-22; William L. Lang, "Tempest on Clore Street: Race and Politics in Helena, Montana, 1906," *Scratchgravel Hills* 3 (Summer 1980): 9-14; Lang, "The Nearly Forgotten Blacks on Last Chance Gulch," 50-57.
- 53 *Colored Citizen* (Helena, MT), October 29, 1894. See also, *Ibid.*, September 1, 1894. White Helena supporters made a similar argument. See "Appeal to Pioneers," *Helena Independent*, October 21, 1894.
- 54 Editor Ball wanted to revise immigration and naturalization laws to "prevent the admission of aliens belonging to the pauper and criminal classes of the old world." See the *Colored Citizen* (Helena, MT), September 10, 1894.
- 55 *Ibid.*, September 24, 1894.
- 56 His emphasis. *Ibid.*, November 5, 1894.
- 57 This set of beliefs is described as showing "the limits of Gilded Age producerism" in Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, 36. See a discussion of workers' views of the Chinese in Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
- 58 For example, see *Anaconda Standard*, September 30, 1894. Anaconda claimed to be "free of the (Chinese) pest," although this was far from the truth. See *Ibid.*, October 4, 1894.

- 59 This view is consistent with the Marxian split-labor market thesis, which argues that when workers gain security, employers try to bring in outside labor with lower expectations for wages and working conditions, thereby preventing inter-ethnic alliances among workers and damaging labor's economic and political position. See Eric Fong and William T. Markham, "Immigration, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The California Chinese, 1849-1882," *Sociological Inquiry* 61, no. 4 (1991): 471-490; Terry E. Boswell, "A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 3 (1986): 352-371. See the initial formulation of this thesis for the American labor market in Edna Bonacich, "Advanced Capitalism and Black/White Relations in the United States: A Split Labor Market Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 41, no. 1 (1976): 34-51. For a discussion of the harsher, more racist view of the Chinese by western labor towards the Chinese than eastern labor, see Rob Weir, "Blind in One Eye: Western and Eastern Knights of Labor View the Chinese Question," *Labor History* 41, no. 4 (2000): 421-436. On the growth of job-conscious unionism suffused with ethnic consciousness amongst entrenched working-class groups like the Irish, see Gwendolyn Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development: Union, Party, and State, 1875-1920* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).
- 60 Robert Swartout Jr., "The Chinese Experience in Montana," in *Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place*, eds. Harry W. Fritz, Mary Murphy, and Robert Swartout, Jr. (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 2002), 45-64. For more on growing discrimination against Montana's Chinese, see John Wunder, "Law and Chinese in Frontier Montana," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 30 (summer 1980): 18-30.
- 61 Larsen, *Populism*, 91. For more on labor's reaction to the Chinese in Montana, and the many local boycotts of Chinese businesses it organized, see Stacy A. Flaherty, "Boycott in Butte: Organized Labor and the Chinese Community, 1896-1897," *Montana: the Magazine of Western History* 37, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 34-47.; ; Larry Barsness, "The Heathen Chinese," in *Chinese on the American Frontier*, ed. Arif Dirlik (Boulder and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 383-413.
- 62 "Helena Wages: The Town as It Is-- The Story of a Helena Workingman," *Populist Tribune* (Butte) in *The Anaconda Standard*, October 6, 1894. See a similar discussion in *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 32.
- 63 *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 32.
- 64 The number of laundries is from Robert Swartout Jr., "The Chinese Experience in Montana," 45-64. For attacks on the Chinese as Helena's servants (as well as feminized pictures of Chinese servants with long hair and flowing robes), see *Helena's Social Supremacy*, 9, 17. See also the *Great Falls*

*Tribune*, September 21, 1894. The *Anaconda Standard* published a list of prominent Helenans who employed Chinese servants as a form of public embarrassment to the city. See the *Anaconda Standard*, October 1, 1894.

- 65 See a discussion of similar subversions of Anglo gender norms in Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: Norton, 2000): 125-127.
- 66 *Great Falls Tribune*, November 1, 1894. See similar sentiments in “Helena’s Ladies Club,” *Anaconda Standard*, October 14, 1894; *Helena’s Social Supremacy*, 40; “A Song of Helena,” *Montanaian* ((Choteau, MT), October 26, 1894.
- 67 “Let Us All Say Amen,” *Anaconda Standard*, October 27, 1894. The women’s protective assembly was an affiliate of the Knights of Labor.
- 68 Flaherty, 35-36.
- 69 *Butte Miner*, November 7, 1894.